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ABSTRACT

The success of Australian intercultural education programs depends on total commitment from educational authorities, community support and expertise, and government endorsement. Program development for intercultural education studies will take place at national, state, and local levels; the objectives of such programs must be consistent. One set of objectives related to ethnicity, cultural identity, and cultural interaction aims to minimize dissonance between the learner and the education system. A second set deals with social inequity by providing opportunities for participation in planning, management, and decision making processes. The main protagonists of intercultural education are educational administrators, teachers, pupils, and Aboriginal or ethnic minority parents and communities. These four groups should take part in program implementation processes: consultation, research and critical analysis, cultural awareness training, and coordination and information dissemination. Intercultural education programs may be subject-based programs with a multicultural perspective, or interdisciplinary studies that may focus on how society works and how students can make the system work in their best interest. Current programs employ one or more of the following classroom strategies to reduce prejudice: (1) direct neutral teaching about race and culture; (2) direct value-laden teaching about race and culture; (3) experiential strategies involving the vicarious experience of belonging to another ethnic group; (4) confrontationist strategies that bring prejudice into the open; and (5) cross-cultural contact. 40 references. (SV)

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NACCME COMMISSIONED RESEARCH PAPER NO 4

A Rationale for Intercultural Education

by
Dr Helen Andreoni and Vasiliki Nihas

RC016783

NACCME COMMISSIONED RESEARCH PAPER NO. 4

A RATIONALE FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

BY

HELEN ANDREONI AND VASILIKI NIHAS

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NACCME

NATIONAL ADVISORY AND CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

PREFACE

The National Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee on Multicultural Education (NACCME) was established by the Minister for Education (and Youth Affairs), Senator Susan Ryan, on 27 March 1984, following from the Government's acceptance of Recommendation 29 of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs Evaluation of Post-Arrival Programs and Services to Migrants (May 1985).

NACCME's Terms of Reference are to:

(i) advise the Minister for Education on matters relating to multicultural education;

(ii) co-ordinate, monitor and review multicultural programs and activities;

(iii) determine an appropriate procedure for information exchange and put that procedure into practice.

NACCME's main function is to provide advice on the needs of multicultural education across a broad spectrum, from pre-school to higher education and information education mechanisms such as the media. The Commonwealth Department of Education provides the Secretariat for the Committee.

At its inaugural meeting, Senator Ryan suggested that the Committee develop a major policy document on multicultural education, and this was taken up as a major task for NACCME over the past three years. On 26 May 1987 NACCME's policy document Education In and For a Multicultural Society: Issues and Strategies for Policy Making was officially launched.

In developing this major policy document NACCME sought input from outside experts by commissioning a number of background research papers.

NACCME is pleased to now release a series of seven papers comprising eight commissioned research papers which had direct input into our own document.

We hope that these papers will add to the pool of information available on, and constructive discussion of, issues in multicultural education.

The views expressed in these papers are not necessarily those of NACCME itself.

This paper entitled A Rationale for Intercultural Education is by Dr Helen Andreoni, Senior Lecturer, Centre for Multicultural Studies, Armidale College of Advanced Education, and Vasiliki Nihas, currently the Assistant Secretary, Liaison and Consultation Branch, Office of Multicultural Affairs. Both are members of NACCME.

This is the fourth paper in the NACCME Commissioned Research Papers Series.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Andreoni and Nihas developed the paper within the framework of a specialised Working Party, one of three set up by NACCME for particular input by its members to the policy document. The paper had to serve two purposes:-

a) to act as a background paper, exploring the issues of intercultural education within the parameters of the document structure

b) to stand on its own, in its own right, as a constructive resource document for teachers and students of intercultural education.

The final paper was completed for release in March 1986.

A RATIONALE FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

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RATIONALE FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

		PAGE
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION	1
	Rationale	1
	Definitions	4
	Objectives for Intercultural Education	6
	Objectives Relating to Ethnicity	9
	Objectives Relating to Equity	10
3.	BASIC PRINCIPLES	12
	Consultation and Participation	13
	Research and Critical Analysis	14
	Awareness and Training	17
	Co-ordination and Communication	18
4.	MODELS FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES	20
	A Model for Curriculum Change	20
	Administration	23
	Programs	27
	Subject Based Programs with a Multicultural Perspective	28
	Interdisciplinary Studies	29
5.	CURRENT PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES	32
	Direct Neutral Teaching About Race and Culture	34
	Direct Value Laden Teaching About Race and Ethnicity	35
	Experiential Strategies	38
	Confrontationist Strategies	41
	Intercultural Contact	42
6.	FUTURE DIRECTIONS	45
	REFERENCES	48

RATIONALE FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

This rationale seeks to explain the nature of Intercultural Education and why it requires government intervention and public funds. Intercultural Education is the umbrella which encompases aspects of Intercultural Communication, Australian Studies, Multicultural Perspectives across the Curriculum, Ethnic Studies, Aboriginal Studies, Anti Racism and Anti Prejudice Programs.

The success of these programs is dependent on total commitment from educational authorities in conjunction with the support and expertise of the community and the endorsement of government. Without such commitment, resources and support, Australia would be unable to provide appropriate and relevant education in and for a multicultural society.

2. INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

Rationale for Intercultural Education

If there are inequities in Australian society linked to ethnic or racial characteristics these are not likely to diminish unless specific policies aim to redress the inequities. It is not enough for educational decision-makers to hope that

the tensions and conflicts which are inevitable in a multicultural society will go away if no one highlights them or recognises them as valid and valuable elements in individual and group identity. Nor is it enough for education systems to rely on the sensitivity and professionalism of the classroom teacher to handle incidents of culturally based conflict and to promote tolerance and respect for cultural difference as the need arises. Intercultural Education must be tackled not only at the individual level but also at the policy-making, systemic levels.

Given that Intercultural Education is about relationships between many different groups in society, it is not realistic to give the task of writing and implementing Intercultural Education policy to a small band of committed enthusiasts working in isolation and with little support either at the school, local or central level. A tokenistic approach to Intercultural Education with only minimal commitment, support and expertise from the power brokers, condemns Intercultural Eduction to marginalisation and limited effectiveness. Even commitment at all levels of the education system will not guarantee total harmony between aspirations and practices. Translating intentions, plans and prescriptions into effective implementation strategies is both difficult and complex.

There are no advantages or techniques that will apply magically across the board. Different beings with different prejudices and different root causes will respond differently

both in their time frames and their actions. The success of Intercultural Education cannot be quantitatively assessed and we have not yet fully developed the qualitative long term measures of assessment that may reflect the inches we move forward in changing attitudes over time. Furthermore, we cannot ever hope to isolate the outcomes of the strategies we employ without taking into account the total, lived experience of the individual and whether this reinforces or negates those strategies.

A major curriculum initiative has more chance of working if planners and supporters realistically assess the kind of pressures that such initiatives put on teachers and the institutionalised limits of success. Barriers to successful innovation identified in a study of the implementation of the N.S.W.'s 1979 and 1983 Multicultural Education Policy were: the time factor, the stress of innovation and the teacher's feeling of inadequacy caused particularly by lack of experience, insufficient training and the complexity of the problems faced in the multicultural arena (Hodge, 1984:9). Perhaps the most challenging task for Intercultural Education, in the context of such a culturally diverse, administrative, teacher, pupil and community population, is to find the balance between creating cultural awareness without fostering cultural stereotyping. The teacher cannot be expected to undertake this difficult task without security and direction.

Understanding and sensitivity achieved by students in the classroom will not be translated into action and commitment towards better intercultural relations unless they have some evidence that society as a whole is moving in the same direction. If, in the wider society ethnic and cultural boundaries continue to

> "coincide with boundaries of power and class and access to the good things society has to offer," (Stenhouse, 1982:2)

then Intercultural Education will be seen as tokenistic, irrelevant or dishonest. If intercultural tension and conflict is not acknowledged, this can lead to the build up of tensions that can result in overt hostility or low-self esteem for members of minority groups. Not dealing with this tension only helps perpetuate the cycle of disadvantage and escalates the conflict.

Definitions

Intercultural Education is the informed exploration of relationships between individuals and groups. It seeks to help the individual to examine the beliefs, values and attitudes of one's ethnic background and that of others. It seeks to develop and promote strategies for effective human interaction and communication between individuals and groups with different cultural affiliations. It endeavours to understand and impart the communication skills of negotiation, consultation and the

handling of conflict and confrontation in a cross-cultural setting.

Intercultural Education is also the study of the dynamic relationships between different groups, their commonalities, their unique characteristics and resources. It seeks to identify, understand and work towards the redress of present and past inequities linked to race and ethnicity with a view to building a more equitable, participatory, harmonious and co-operatively oriented society. Specifically in and through education, Intercultural Education seeks to remove systemic bias to ensure that educational access and outcomes are more equitably shared through the empowerment of ethnic minorities, that different cultural perspectives are incorporated into the education sytem and that the education of all children is enriched through cultural understanding.

In the formal education setting Intercultural Education refers to both processes and programs. The two major processes identified are Multicultural Perspectives across the Curriculum and Intercultural Education (NSW Department of Education, Multicultural Education Policy, 1983). Some programs that come under the umbrella terms of Intercultural Education are Intercultural Studies and Ethnic Studies (Hodge, 1984:49-50).

All decisions about intercultural processes and programs are informed by a particular understanding of Community

Relations in a multicultural society, a term sometimes used interchangeably with race-relations and intergroup relations where race or ethnicity are central elements. Community Relations looks at contact between groups characterised by ethnicity or race and considers not only the effect of social attitudes but also those "relations stemming directly from the structure of society and existing patterns of discrimination which are not randomly distributed" (Skelton, 85a:6).

There is some question about the capacity of Intercultural Education to achieve a greater level of equity in a multicultural society which genuinely acknowledges and values cultural diversity. Clearly Australian society and the education systems that serve it are not currently structured in a way that promotes equity and equality of educational outcomes. Intercultural Education has to face conservative forces designed to protect the status quo. It is as well to have clearly defined objectives, realistic expectations and some knowledge of the constraints that are operating.

Objectives for Intercultural Education

The development of policy and programs for Intercultural Education studies will take place at the national, state and local levels. While local variations are inevitable in translating policy into practice, the aims and objectives of such programs need to be consistent. Of necessity, different

targets will be incorporated. These relate to student/teacher/community participation and interaction; curriculum development; the organisational structure of educational institutions; staff development and teacher training. The strategies needed to address the different target groups will vary and will incorporate specific aims and objectives accordingly.

It seems possible, in the first instance, to isolate objectives relating to questions of ethnicity, cultural identity and cultural interaction. These aim to minimise dissonance between the learner and the education system. A second set of objectives emerge which relate to minimising social inequity. These deal with the provision of opportunities for participation in the planning, management and decision-making processes. Overlap between the two sets of objectives is inevitable. They cannot be realised independently of each other.

The attainment of these objectives will be significantly influenced by the degree to which education authorities have participated in incorporating multicultural perspectives into policy and practice in a positive way. In the final analysis, each individual will make decisions on what elements of culture and language will be maintained, developed or rejected. However, even though this is a personal decision, it will be significantly affected by the degree to which language and

culture are perceived in a positive light by the learning institution and the wider society.

In general, Intercultural Education aims to support the development of a responsive education system which

- acknowledges that individuals making up Australian society have their origins and contexts in a diverse range of cultures, races, religions and political systems.
- explores the concept of what constitutes Australian society and Australian identity.
- reconciles the placement and contributions of Aboriginal, ethnic majority and ethnic minority group identities within an evolving Australian society.
- respects the right of individuals to express cultural and linguistic identity within the framework of a society committed to its legal institutions and the non-violent resolution of conflict through democratic processes.
- promotes a climate of sensitivity and receptivity to cultural and linguistic diversity.
- engenders a sensitivity to the cultural complexities underlying each individual's unique ordering of environment.
- encourages a willingness to understand cultural difference and accommodation.
- achieves cultural interaction without diminishing or devaluing specific ethnic identities.
- supports respectful human interaction and the development of harmonious interrelationships in a society which is culturally and linguistically diverse.

Objectives Relating to Ethnicity

More specifically, Intercultural Education programs will need to develop appropriate educational material and methodologies, relating to ethnicity, which will

- help learners to gain an enhanced sense of personal worth through an understanding and appreciation of their cultural and linguistic heritage and the contribution that their indigenous or ethnic group has already made to Australian society.
- provide learners with a range of informed historical perspectives on the contribution of different indigenous and ethnic groups in Australia, past and present, and a sense of themselves as potential contributors.
- support learners to develop powers of critical analysis, appraisal and discernment which will help them make decisions about their identities, their values, and the extent to which these values are consistent with their practices.
- encourage learners to recognise the nature and extent of ethnocentrism, prejudice and racism in their own belief systems and actions as well as in those of others.
- promote in learners an understanding of conflict, its positive and negative dimensions, in the context of the individual, the group, the nation and other nations.
- familiarise learners with a range of strategies they may wish to employ in the face of racism and/or discrimination.
- afford learners the opportunity to trace the history of ethnic groups and their transition from country of origin to Australia.

The objectives relating to ethnicity apply not only to learners but to their teachers. Teachers, through preservice and inservice need to be:

- supported in confronting their own cultural value systems and biases.
- provided with opportunities to familiarise themselves with a range of strategies to enable them to deal with conflict issues, and issues of prejudice and discrimination whether these are encountered in the system, the administration or the classroom.
- offered the opportunity to develop their understanding of verbal and non-verbal communication in a multi-cultural context.
- encouraged to develop and initiate strategies which ensure that questions of racism and discrimination at the level of the school and the institution, do not go unchallenged.
- encouraged to promote initiatives in the area of multicultural perspectives across curricula through their individual disciplines.
- supported in critically examining the resources and materials they use, to ensure that these are non-discriminatory and non-offensive.

Objectives Relating to Equity

Translating the above objectives into educational policy and practice, would produce an educational climate where the possibility exists to attain equity of opportunity and equitable outcomes. This can only be achieved if the decision-making processes are shared and involve not only consultation, but the direct participation of individuals with reflective and informed viewpoints on issues affecting indigenous and ethnic community groups. To this end, education systems need to

- respond creatively in developing decision-making processes which will enable education systems to accommodate different cultural traditions and practices.

- develop mechanisms which will allow members of Aboriginal and ethnic minority groups to take part in the decision-making processes of education as they currently exist.

- encourage administrators and teachers at all levels to promote effective communication and liaison which will involve Aboriginal and ethnic minority communities in the education of their members.

- ensure the continuing representation of Aboriginal and ethnic minority group members on committees allocating resources and funding for Aboriginal and multicultural education.

- explore alternative administrative and organisational arrangements to enable flexibility in meeting the special needs of schools with a majority of students from Aboriginal and/or non-English speaking backgrounds.

- establish interpreting and translating facilities accessible across all levels of education to ensure that parents understand and contribute to the educative processes involving their children.

- develop specialised programs for educational and vocational counsellors working with Aboriginal and ethnic minority group learners.

- promote in educational institutions a standard policy of utilising Aboriginal and ethnic minority groups as a valuable education resource.

- support affirmative action strategies which increase the numbers of individuals from Aboriginal and other ethnic minority groups at different levels of the education process with the aim of increasing the responsiveness of educational services. This must be supported with specific staff development programs to create a receptive climate to the incoming program.

- support the provision of adequate student assistance particularly for Aboriginal and refugee students.
- instigate research to examine the interactive impact of the variables of ethnicity, class and gender.
- promote public discussion and dissemination of strategies already being undertaken in the area.

3. BASIC PRINCIPLES

Intercultural Education requires support and commitment at the top of each educational hierarchy as well as within and across the mainstream of educational decision-making. Without this support, it is not possible to implement the administrative, policy and program changes necessary for Intercultural Education. The main protagonists of Intercultural Education are educational administrators, teachers, pupils and Aboriginal and/or ethnic minority group parents and their communities. The important processes and procedures necessary for implementing Intercultural Education are: consultation and participation; research and critical analysis; awareness and training; co-ordination and communication.

Each system and school will be at different stages of the development of policy and practice for Intercultural Education but Table I will help identify what has been achieved and what might follow.

TABLE I

	Educational Administrators	Teachers	Pupils	Aboriginal and/or Ethnic Parents & Communities
Consultation & Participation				
Research & Critical Analysis				
Awareness & Training				
Co-ordination & Communication				

Consultation and Participation

A major task of Intercultural Education is to identify systemic bias at work within the education system, to eliminate inequities linked with race and ethnicity and to incorporate different cultural perspectives into the curriculum. This cannot be done from within a system that is largely monocultural and conservative. Mechanisms must be established and maintained at all levels to ensure that there is shared consultation, decision-making, co-operation and review between educational administrators, teachers, ethnic minority and Aboriginal

parents, and community members, for developing policy and practice in the area of Intercultural Education.

Consultation with classroom teachers who are charged with the task of making Intercultural Education work in the classroom is all too often perfunctory and inadequate. There is little evidence to suggest consultation is currently extended to include pupils although this is obviously a possibility in the future. Consultation with Aboriginal and ethnic minority community members is often in a format that suits educational administrators and is subject to the vagaries of a government which appoints and, just as easily, disbands "consultative" committees.

Most importantly however, the distinction needs to be made between consultation and decision-making. The former can become an excuse which negates the need for the latter. Consultation alone is simply not enough. Unless it is accompanied by access to the decision-making processes, it runs the risk of tokenism.

Research and Critical Analysis

Decisions about implementing Intercultural Education have to be made on the basis of up-to-date, pertinent information about the positive and negative aspects of Australia's multicultural society. We need to know much more about the cultural resources that are not being tapped, promoted and shared and the systemic bias and inequities linked with race and

ethnicity. Intercultural Education is affected by cultural affiliations, knowledge of cultural diversity, and attitudes towards cultural diversity.

The cultural affiliations, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of Aboriginal and ethnic communities have been researched. Some knowledge is available about the cultural background of students. Little is known about those of teachers. Almost nothing is known about those of educational administrators' and how their cultural affiliations, knowledge of and attitudes towards cultural diversity might affect Intercultural Education. This imbalance of research and analysis reflects power relationships. There is a need to redress the balance and present a different perspective.

> "Since white occupation of Australia, much has been written about the indigenous population; the Kooris. In fact we are probably the most studied race of people in Australia. Academics have dealt with just about every aspect of Koori life. Archaeologists have dug, measured, recorded and drawn. Anthropologists have observed, written, compared and hypothesised, while linguists have listened, tape-recorded, structured and transcribed. There seems to be a never-ending suppy of information on Kooris, researched by countless people throughout Australia. Most documentation has been written by white people and interpreted in a white man's way. More recently, however, there have been a number of Koori writers, writing about their own. They are now interpreting Koori life-styles, both past and present, through their own eyes. (Miller, 1985:xv).

It is extremely difficult to research systemic bias and structural inequities when researchers outside the educational

bureaucracies are not encouraged to study the beliefs and values of decision-makers or have easy access to information about student background, achievements, testing, streaming and educational outcomes. Obstructing this type of research can only help perpetuate inequities. Most systems and schools have reached the head-counting stage: how many children from Aboriginal and ethnic minority groups are in the system/school. This information needs to be seen as a starting point that has to be refined and expanded if it is to usefully inform decisions about Intercultural Education.

Research and critical analysis is also crucial for the development of effective teaching strategies and appropriate resources for Intercultural Education. Too often materials that claim to be factual and objective present the "Verdict of the Victors" and use resources as propaganda to perpetuate the current inequities. The process of re-writing resources for use in the classroom in a way that reflects different cultural perspectives and experiences is difficult, costly and requires extensive consultation and research beyond the areas of easy access. The process must begin with highlighting the biases of material currently in use. (e.g. Hill and Barlow, 1978). Research must then go on to the collection of information about different cultural experiences, viewed from the perspective of the participants. This allows for forgotten or ignored aspects of history to be brought to a wider audience and used in

traditional subject areas or as part of new initiatives and inter-disciplinary approaches. (e.g. Fewster, 1985).

Awareness and Training

Teacher Education and Staffing Policies are crucial areas of support for curriculum initiatives. Expertise in Intercultural Education should be an essential element of pre- and post-teacher training. Staffing policies which determine who is promoted to senior staff and administrative positions in a school or system will also determine the status and consequently the success of new curriculum initiatives. Expertise in Intercultural Education cannot be presumed or ignored. Cultural awareness and training programs have to be run for administrators and teachers alike.

Equally important, through affirmative action policies, is the presence of members of minority groups in all levels of educational administration and teaching. However, even though many have experienced prejudice and discrimination at first hand, they may still need to reflect on and integrate their experiences. They would also benefit from specialised training in the area of Intercultural Education and access to the available literature. After all, personal experience can embitter, entrench prejudice, or lead to decisions to bring about change. The level of commitment to change the system and

a knowledge of the avenues open to effect such change will ultimately lead to success or failure.

Training for pupils in Intercultural Education is currently not mandatory in all educational systems. This reflects varied perceptions of its role and status amongst educational administrators and teachers although there is evidence of considerable community support. (Cahill, 1984:306). Members of ethnic and Aboriginal communities who are expected to share in educational decision-making should also be given access to training programs that will help them understand the education system and identify key areas requiring change.

Co-ordination and Communication

A consistent approach to Intercultural Education Policy has to be worked out both centrally and locally. There have to be clear guidelines on what is mandatory and what a school itself determines, based on that particular school's needs. That same consistency must follow, within and across systems in the basic values underlying administration, policies, programs and practices. Co-ordination across related areas of new curriculum initiatives should be worked through centrally and at the local level to develop an integrated policy embracing the concerns shared by the number of areas coming under the umbrella term of multicultural education. There is a limit to the number of initiatives in which a system or school can invest energy and

resources. Such initiatives require support in a variety of areas.

All centrally funded projects and programs need to be kept in touch with the needs of classroom teachers. External funding is essential for teacher release, production of materials and access to specialised expertise. However, this same external funding encourages the idea that programs and projects which are thus funded, are outside mainstream curricula, and therefore not the responsibility of the school or the central system. Further, the notion is legitimised that such programs cannot survive without outside funds. Programs and projects will have no lasting long-term impact unless the school system is willing and able to sustain them and unless the project or program can influence other areas of curriculum (Skelton, 1985b). The tensions created by reconciling essential outside funding with long-term lasting impact on the curriculum can be used creatively by classroom teachers working co-operatively with specialist resource developers and consultants.

Responsibility for disseminating information about intercultural policies and programs and appropriate resources rests largely with central authorities. Attention has to be given to devising the most effective way of disseminating policies to schools and ensuring that the experiences gained through successful and not so successful programs are shared.

With limited time, resources and energy, there is little point in re-inventing the wheel or repeating past failures. Knowledge about successful programs and policies in different states, systems and schools gives positive reinforcement to the initiators. It inspires others to try, and encourages minority groups to view intercultural programs as more than marginal, tokenistic, short-term efforts. Such dissemination bears witness to a continued commitment to the principles, aims and objectives of Intercultural Education.

4. MODELS FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A Model for Curriculum Change

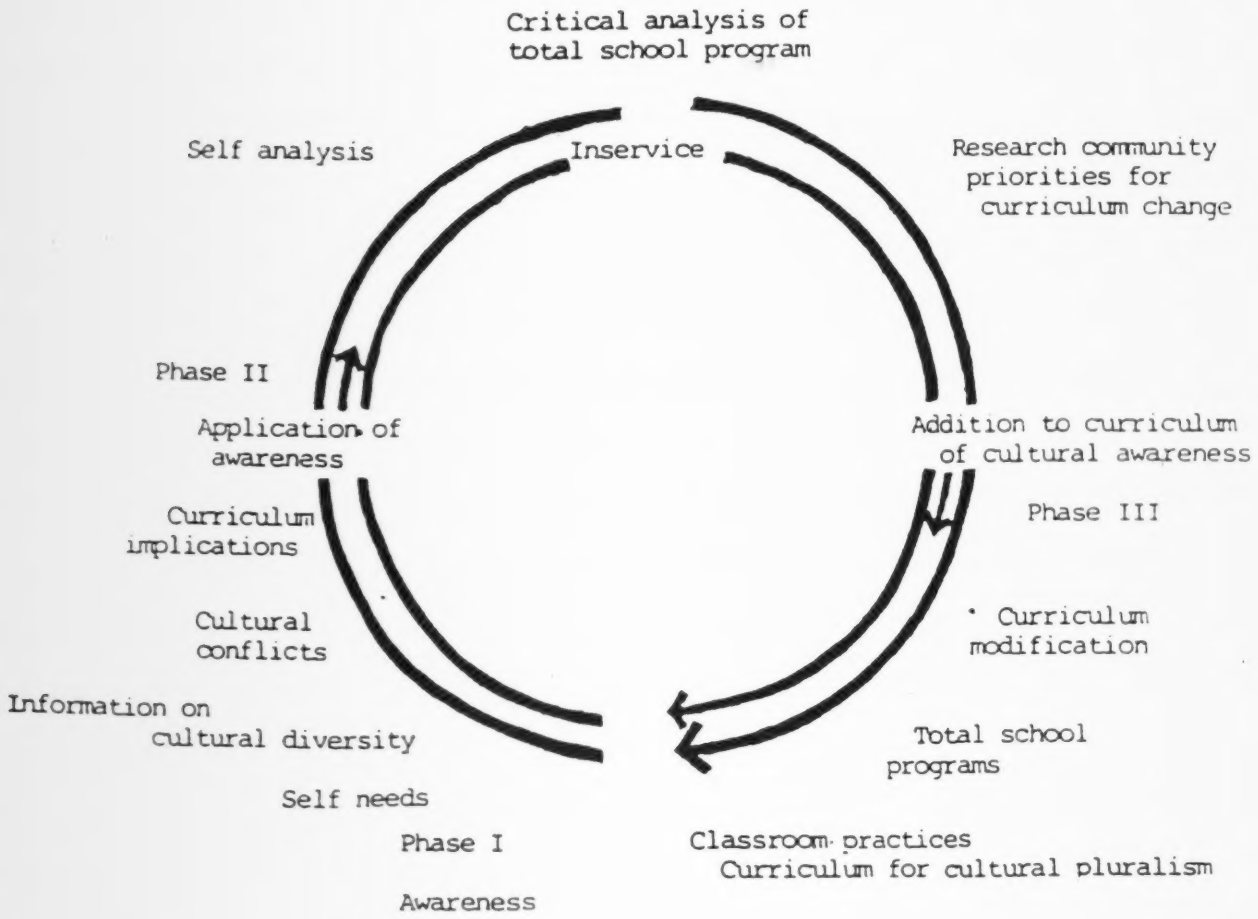
No school can presume that within its walls, prejudiced attitudes do not exist, that discrimination does not occur and that these do not affect educational opportunities and outcomes.

If the school believes that one of its major tasks is to support the personal growth of all students, then in a multicultural society, this means addressing the needs of a culturally diverse clientele and/or one that will need to function in a culturally diverse society. School level policy needs to ensure that all students are encouraged to share and reflect on their cultural backgrounds and given opportunities either within or outside the school for positive interaction beyond an individual's cultural group. Each school will respond differently to this challenge depending on the class, school,

community populations and the relationships within and between them.

Whatever the school and community profile, mechanisms need to be established to ensure the development and review of sound Intercultural Education policy and practice. One of the most effective models is the Esperanza Model, developed by Aragon (Stent, 1973:84). This has been adapted for Australian conditions by a group of twenty one people from all over Australia. (Nihas et al. 1982:22-26). The steps involved are shown below diagramatically:

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR CULTURAL PLURALISM



Existing Curriculum

Based on Esperanza Model for Curriculum Development for Cultural Pluralism. Ref. "An Impediment to Cultural Pluralism. Culturally Deficient Teachers Attempting to Teach Culturally Different Children". John Aragon in M. D. Stent, W. R. Hazard and H. N. Rivlin (ed.) "Cultural Pluralism" in "Education: A Mandate for Change" Prentice Hall Inc. 1973.

Not all schools or institutions have felt able to review their curriculum policy and practice in the way suggested above. Certainly, it cannot be done without the help of members of minority groups who have particular insights and sensitivities and can bring different cultural perspectives to the process of review and self-analysis. A thorough re-examination of the curriculum and the development of policy can give rise to carefully thought through and co-ordinated Intercultural Education programs with benefits at the level of administration, programs and strategies.

Administration

Intercultural Education is about effective human interaction and communication in a cross-cultural setting. It is important that intercultural understanding, respect and sensitivity advocated in curriculum, should be reflected in the way a school or institution operates. Teacher attitudes and school practices working against a program designed to develop and foster cross-cultural insights and understanding, can easily undermine and destroy any chance of challenging student attitudes (Skelton, 1984:7). A school conveys a great deal of information about teacher attitudes and school priorities through its organisational structure. At the most basic level one can begin by considering whether the school acknowledges the individual's right to control at least part of the school environment by giving students, staff, parents and community members, irrespective of cultural background, access to

decision-making in the school. Respect for individual rights is a basic building block for any further acknowledgement of a group's right to maintain and develop a particular cultural and linguistic identity.

The size of a school, the grouping of students, timetable priorities and elective programs (Skelton, 1985b:15) can all work for or against ensuring that a school " practises what it preaches" in the field of Intercultural Education. One of the most hidden parts of the hidden curriculum is in the areas of assessment, grouping and disciplining procedures used in a school. These represent likely areas of systemic discrimination but are difficult to tackle because they masquerade as objective and culture free. However, they have profound consequences for the equality of educational access and outcomes. Assessment procedures organised at central or local level can very easily reflect the bias of most tests and testing procedures against people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Within a school using streaming, divisions which are apparent where clusters of people from non-English-speaking and Aboriginal backgrounds are in the lower streams, should alert the school system to the possibility of systemic bias at work.

School discipline is another area of potential discrimination. Most school-based control tactics are culturally bound and often not shared across cultural groups. Parental and community involvement should be sought in the development of a policy on school discipline to ensure that the

school's control mechanisms are sensitive to cultural factors and not inadvertently falling more heavily on members of a specific cultural group. The school's approach to ethnic or racist name-calling or related controversy and conflict will signal clearly to student and community alike, its basic approach to discrimination, bias and racist behaviour. Without a clear policy and/or guidelines on how to deal with these matters, tacit acceptance is given to racism.

In the day-to-day running of a school there are many ways a school can declare and promote its commitment to fair play and ensuring equal rights for a culturally diverse population. At the very least, it can make a point of accommodating dietary and religious needs, celebrating and respecting National and Holy days. Beyond the "International Day" which can be seen as an important way of promoting the school's attitude to cultural diversity and bringing the school and community together, the institution or school should look at ways it can promote, within its policy and practice, a multilingual and multicultural identity. The school must avoid driving a wedge between school and home if curriculum strategies are to be broadly supported within the school and the community (Hodge, 1984:44). An obvious way for a school to consolidate its commitment to meeting the needs of a culturally diverse population is to support parents and community members in their fight for language maintenance. The school may also indicate clearly that it regards learning a second language as an essential part of a monolingual child's education.

The school should be prepared to debate and defend with logical argument what it regards as the non-negotiables. This might be the equal treatment of males or females or a commitment to peace, to sport, art, music or a respect for the environment. A democratic system dictates that there should be a forum for all involved in the educational process to debate the non-negotiables, air grievances and express contrary views. This should be complemented with a mechanism to effect change and allow for renegotiation if there is a groundswell of opposition. Controversy and debate can be a most effective way of leading to new cultural understanding, especially if the problem is tackled co-operatively and where a school or the individual teacher, student or parent is mature and confident enough to accept a questioning of basic assumptions.

All children in the school should be regarded as Australians. The language of teachers and educational administrators often reveals that this is not a deeply held belief. Labels such as "them and us", "Australians and migrants", "Australians and Italians", often reflect a deep seated resistance to accepting people from different backgrounds into the ingroup. These same exclusionist attitudes are behind an unwillingness to learn unfamiliar names, different body language and other customs that are culturally determined.

Good communication between Aboriginal and minority group parents, the school and the community, demands that written material produced by the school be translated into the languages

of the school, that there be multilingual teachers and support staff and that translators be available at school meetings to ensure the participation of parents who do not speak English. School administrators and teachers often believe that the way they do things and run the school is perfectly obvious and logical. People coming from different education systems often find many things that the school takes for granted, are perplexing and even incomprehensible. There is a need for information about school programs and organisation to be made available in all the languages of the school. There are many different ways of initiating and increasing parental participation and creating an environment where parents and teachers are partners, able to engage in meaningful cross-cultural dialogue and able to influence each others' attitudes beliefs and behaviour. (Nihas et al. 1982:23-27).

This section has looked at the administration of schools. The day-to-day running of a classroom must also reflect a respect for cultural difference. Good materials or positive teacher attitudes alone are not enough. Teaching programs and strategies as well as classroom interactions have to be in tune with the objectives of Intercultural Education.

Programs

Identifying appropriate Intercultural Education programs requires a school to carefully consider the differing needs of the majority and minority school populations, the different target groups and the needs of individuals within those groups.

The school can select from two major program types: one that is subject based but adopts a multicultural perspective across the discipline and the other that is interdisciplinary. Both require different kinds of planning and implementation and are by no means mutually exclusive.

Subject Based Programs with A Multicultural Perspective

This approach is a less threatening way of introducing changes into the mainstream curriculum. Teachers are already working within a familiar structure and hopefully in a subject area for which they were trained. Affecting change within traditional subject areas is more likely to ensure permanent change in the school curriculum (Skelton, 1985b:15-16). What has to be carefully considered is the level of change effected. Superficial changes, the occasional mention of minority group and Aboriginal issues, without incorporation into the body of a program, are more likely to convey to the student that these are peripheral matters relevant only to some small elective section of the subject area. Serious changes of perspective within a subject area, must ensure that the relevance is extended beyond minority groups to all pupils.

Profound changes in the direction of subject area teaching will not occur if the resources used continue to reflect a monocultural world view and continue to perpetuate stereotypes. At central and local level, efforts have to be made to develop resources that reflect a wide range of differing cultural

perspectives. An effective way of developing local resources and discovering different cultural perspectives for use in specific subject areas is by researching the school community. Oral history provides a particularly useful vehicle by which this can be done (Wilton, 1984:41-54). The discovery of ignored or hidden information about Australia's Aboriginal or non-English-speaking background history, is important in effecting curriculum and attitude change in teacher and pupil alike. The students, by working in the community, are made aware of the cultural diversity that is and has been so much a part of Australian society. They may experience the richness and/or inequities that characterise that diversity. The students should be given the tools to analyse bias in information and to develop a critical awareness that makes them less vulnerable to absorbing unquestioningly their own or some else's ethnocentric monocultural world-view.

Interdisciplinary Studies

For many reasons a school might elect to use an interdisciplinary approach. Intercultural Education often addresses issues beyond traditional subject areas and the interdisciplinary approach allows the teacher to make connections that often have to be ignored or minimised by the teacher confined to a subject area.

For many, what are commonly called programs in Social and Political Literacy indicate an important educational direction and one that encompasses many of the concerns of Intercultural

Education. It focuses on how society works at a socio-political level, how individuals and groups can make it work for them and who the society is working against. This kind of information should be accessible to all students.

However, Intercultural Education is also about the empowerment of ethnic minorities and Aboriginal groups through understanding how systems work and learning how to make them work in their best interests. Social and political literacy courses should therefore give students an understanding of basic concepts such as culture, gender, identity and socialisation. More specifically, minority groups need to know how prejudice, discrimination, racism, stereotyping, scapegoating can work against sectors of the community. It is not enough to identify areas of inequity. Students, particularly minority students, should be taught how to use their own formal and informal network to lobby more effectively for changes in the political and social arena. Students should be familiar with current legislation to protect individual rights and the different avenues for redress such as the

- Commissioner for Human Relations
- Human Rights Commission
- Ethnic Affairs Commissions
- Equal Opportunity Tribunals and Officers in large institutions and Government Departments
- Specific Unions
- The Ombudsman
- The Media
- Educational bodies such as the NSW Education Commission
- NACCME
- State MECC's or Multicultural Advisory Committees

Many are wary of moving education towards such an overtly political and social role. However, to pretend that education does not already operate in such an area through its selection and credentialling procedures, is to ignore current and past realities.

The interdisciplinary approach within the context of Intercultural Education should lead to greater co-ordination between new and existing curriculum initiatives. Competing and unco-ordinated claims on the curriculum disperse a school's energies and work against shared objectives. Many related areas of interdisciplinary curriculum initiatives could combine forces in a broadly-based social education program (Skelton, 1985b:4). Such a program could incorporate basic concepts central to Peace Education, Multicultural Education, Anti-Racist Education, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Legislation. Whichever of these banners or foci is preferred by the teacher, or school they all involve the study of:

> "... prejudiced attitudes, the power relationships they often reflect and the discrimination they can lead to (which) are central to the issues of equality of educational opportunity and outcomes." (Skelton, 1984:11)

There is considerable agreement as to the importance of these objectives and the role education can play in ensuring that the next generation of Australians is more aware and sensitive to political and social forces that control their lives and can be influenced by their actions. What is required to translate these objectives into action is a clear

description of the range of strategies that can be used in the classroom either in subject based or interdisciplinary programs.

5. CURRENT PROGRAMS AND STRATEGIES

The aim of the following programs and strategies is to modify values and attitudes and behaviour where these militate against the objectives of Intercultural Education. This is a legitimate aim of education and one that can have lasting outcomes. Strategies refer to short-term activities generated in the classroom. These cannot succeed where the environment outside the classroom contradicts the aims of the program being taught within it. Nor can any short-term changes be consolidated without long term support, planning and appropriate infrastructures.

Children can reflect prejudices found in the community and the family but they are also capable of generating prejudices of their own.

> "A high degree of racial prejudice is a strong function (of) personal anxiety, poor self-esteem and neurosis. An obvious conclusion is that because many prejudiced children (and adults) evidently use such prejudices to shore up their own self-esteem, in such children (and adults) prejudicial attitudes are likely to be quite resistant to change."
> (Buchignani, 1984:14)

Strategies aimed at reducing prejudice in the majority population should not negatively affect the self-esteem of minority group children. Strategies have to be designed to meet the needs of all sectors in the classroom.

Changing attitudes and values is a difficult task and clearly indicates that a holistic approach is required. It is not enough to focus only on cognitive objectives. This approach, in isolation, can re-inforce prejudice and stereotypes, starting a backlash against members of minority groups in the classroom and elsewhere. Affective and behavioural objectives have to be taken into consideration in any selection of strategies. If the teacher succeeds in changing behaviour, a change in attitudes and values can occur if the individual opts to maintain a consistent stance.

Johnson and Matross (1975:67) argue that the three major forces which prevent attitude change are: defensiveness, egocentrism and demoralisation. Defensiveness is reduced by creating an environment of openness and trust. Egocentrism is reduced by using a range of strategies designed to provoke empathy with individuals beyond the immediate ingroup. Demoralisation is guarded against by ensuring that all students experience success, positive re-inforcement and feel good about themselves before they are expected to change attitudes. The following strategies which relate to all three forces have been divided into categories which are by no means mutually exlusive and which at times overlap. These are:

Direct Neutral Teaching About Race and Culture

Direct Value Laden Teaching About Race and Culture

Experiential Strategies

Confrontationist Strategies

Intercultural Contact

Direct Neutral Teaching About Race and Culture

The teacher using this strategy presents him/herself as a neutral chairperson. All expressions of opinion, no matter how bigoted, are accepted as a starting point for discussion. Factual material on racial and ethnic minorities is used to highlight historical and day to day inequities suffered in Australian society. This strategy often uses the framework of Ethnic Studies. Because the information is presented in a neutral way, there is a danger that the information is seen as removed, irrelevant or strange to the pupil from either the majority or minority groups. A neutral stance does not challenge the individual's belief, the focus on the minority group as victim of the majority group could lead the individual to proclaim that the victim is responsible. Any alternative thesis would require the individual to rethink his/her position which there is no incentive to do.

This tendency to distance oneself from what is being studied and to "blame the victim" can be counteracted by a very carefully planned Intercultural Studies program that is aimed at developing the analytical skills and the key concepts necessary to appreciate the complex dynamics of the power relationships in a society where race and ethnicity are key elements. This requires the teacher to establish a framework for understanding the nature of racism, culture and communication, prejudice, stereotyping and scapegoating. The teacher must then support the pupil with the tools to analyse the self and determine

relationships within the wider society. Pupils need to develop not only analytical skills, but also negotiation skills which will allow them to reach beyond the known and the given in order to resolve conflicts that may arise.

The student in an Intercultural Studies program with an Ethnic Studies component should be able to identify, understand and interact across different cultural groups. This approach is essentially pupil centred. The teacher only indirectly establishes parameters determined by the specific aims and objectives of Intercultural Education.

Direct Value Laden Teaching About Race and Ethnicity

This strategy seeks to impart skills and basic concepts through Intercultural Education as described above but focuses on the commonalities across different cultures. The information content is not depersonalised but presented in a provocative, confrontationist way that challenges the student's values and preconceptions. This strategy seeks to make greater use of the affective component to ensure a shift of attitude by seeking to make race and ethnicity meaningful and relevant to the student. The teacher adopts an overtly moral stance, condemning the expression of prejudice and manifestations of discriminatory behaviour. After such courses, the students can no longer claim ignorance as an excuse for racist or prejudiced behaviour.

In Australia, a carefully structured program has been developed using this particular strategy. It is known as the

Social Literacy Project written by Mary Kalantzis and Bill Cope. The course is designed to develop in children an understanding of the nature and purpose of culture. It identifies three levels of awareness about culture and seeks to guide pupils step by step through these levels. The first level is a study of bigotry, parochialism and racism. It involves understanding how " living unconsciously within one's own culture, mistrusting alien cultures" (Kalantzis, 1980-81:128) is common to all. The next level focuses on cultural relativism which is defined as "no way of life, society, system of ideas and values or point of view is better than any other. Cultures are just different (ibid)". The final stage is called Cultural Transcendence. Its aim is

> "not to reproduce the culture of one's ancestors for its own sake, but to be able to stand back from one's cultural background in as detached a way as possible and make an informed choice about one's own life and about a desirable socio-cultural life."
>
> (Kalantzis, 1980-81:129)

The authors of this course have very clear ideas of where they want the student to go and what conclusions should be reached.The course presupposes that cognitive sophistication will allow and indeed encourage the individual to recognise stereotypes and prejudice in his/her own behaviour and in that of others. This it presumes will lead to a lessening of the power of the immediate cultural group which will in turn lead to "a better human future" (ibid.).

This value-laden strategy is also used by those who seek not cultural transcendence but rather the development and maintenance of a specific cultural and linguistic world view. It gives information about present and past inequities the minority group has suffered and aids pupils in using the cognitive skills needed to understand how prejudice works and inequities are perpetuated. The criteria for selecting what goes into the "Ethnic Studies" or information component of the course is what will highlight past and present inequitites and what will encourage members of that minority group to take up the fight to ensure better outcomes for the future. For minority groups working through traditional education systems, there is an inbuilt conflict in this approach as with community language programs which are aimed at fostering ethnic identity (Andreoni, 1983). Most school systems would be uncomfortable being involved in a course with such an overtly political role that so directly challenges the status quo. If minority groups are prepared to make the compromises necessary to allow the presentation of some of their history and perspectives in the schools then,

> "Exposition of ideas along traditional channels implies acceptance of the very values that created the history he (the ethnic minority student/group) is trying to escape"
> (Deloria in Stent, 1973:134)

This approach has only some hope of affecting change within the system if the views are presented by minority group representatives who have high status in the eyes of the pupils. This approach to succeed also requires an organisational

structure where the school encourages and respects divergent rather than convergent thinking, respects difference and shows understanding and sensitivity for those who do not share the values and beliefs of the majority and those in power (Hodge, 1984:48-49). This description does not fit many educational institutions in Australia.

Although all strategies use the cognitive, affective and behavioural domains to some extent, direct neutral and value-laden teaching about race, relies heavily on the cognitive area. The following strategies put more emphasis on the affective and behavioural area through the use of direct experience and intercultural contact.

Experiential Strategies

The purpose of experiential strategies is to personalise, make relevant and bring to life, teaching about race and ethnicity. The major focus is to help the learner to understand and empathise with the experiences of individuals of another cultural group. At times, experiential strategies use association to help the learner feel what it is like to be excluded or discounted because of colour, physical attributes or not belonging to the in-group.

Pettman, who wrote Teaching for Human Rights for the Human Rights Commission (1984), and Kalantzis-Cope (1980-81) use these associative strategies frequently. For example, students are asked to select their preferred colour, or their preferred

people or their preferred box whether gift-wrapped or in brown paper. The danger is that frequently these classroom "games" function at such a superficial level that they do not remotely simulate what it is like to be rejected because of ethnicity or race. The focus is almost always on the negative elements of being a member of a minority group. The balance of positive attributes is missing. The only justification for such simulation games and the experiential, associative strategies is the quality of discussion they may give rise to in the classroom.

An important range of experiential strategies involves the vicarious experience of what it is like to be a member of an ethnic minority in Australia through the study of films, poetry, novels, short stories, oral histories that present a different cultural perspective and a different view of what constitutes Australia and what it is to be Australian. This gives the pupil access to a wider range of experiences than is usually available through the immediate environment and helps develop empathy and greater intercultural understanding. The pupil's own creative abilities should also be drawn upon by encouraging the writing and illustrating of plays, poems, stories as well as scripting and making films, role plays, role reversals, and interviewing community members.

This creative material, the process of putting it together, simulation games and student research can all help to create a context in which to discuss the broader issues of cultural

diversity, migration and the nature of prejudice and racism. It allows Intercultural Education to focus not only on the difficult elements of interactions in a multicultural society but also on the richness and variety, the rewards and resources of different cultural dimensions.

At times, individuals, particularly those from a mono-cultural background, are not ready or able to make contact with people from different cultural backgrounds or to view events from their perspective either directly or through creative, expressive strategies. Such individuals often feel more comfortable teaching or learning about race and ethnicity through written, theoretical studies. A way of using this preference for the theoretical whilst developing the skills necessary to communicate cross-culturally is by the case-study approach. Case-studies, essentially works of fiction, can be developed by people working in areas of cross-cultural communication. Describing the advantages of case studies used in Canada at workshops designed to promote cross-cultural awareness for professionals, the author, noted below, suggests the reason for the success of case-studies:

> "Essentially works of fiction (they are) close enough to real life to be readily identified with it. However, because of the shield of fictionalisation, no one needed to feel that a finger was being pointed at them or the organisation they represented."
> (Littman, 1985:vii)

Particularly in relation to the need to identify areas of institutional discrimination and ways to counteract it, the case

study approach can become an invaluable experiential strategy. Again we can refer to the Canadian experience.

> "Perhaps the most useful aspects of the case-study approach is the way in which it can serve to show the commonalities of experience, problems and possibilities of seemingly diverse settings. For example, we identified a thread that ran through all the case-studies, the importance of individuals expectations, institutional climates, discriminatory attitudes and practices, and the psychosocial aspects of organisational workings that get in the way of change. As one participant put it, "Relationships are the root of it all". Most of the institutions were found to be hierarchial, fearful of those who are different, and tended to blame the victims for their problems. They create dependency, then chastise the client for being dependent. Once this fact was perceived, problem-solving tended to focus on insider's actions over which we have some control and therefore was more productive."
>
> (Blumenberg, 1985:7)

Such claims for what is still a vicarious experience, deserve serious consideration for inclusion in an intercultural program.

Confrontationist Strategies

Confrontationist strategies represent a range of strategies that relate to the objectives of Intercultural Education. They have surfaced in England, Australia and New Zealand. (Ashrif, 1984; Catchpole, 1986; Cameron, 1985). They all express impatience at the results produced through the use of strategies that emphasise an indirect, supportive approach to changing racist and prejudiced attitudes. The confrontationist strategies that have evolved as a result of that frustration are based on the belief that little can be done about racist and prejudiced attitudes unless these are allowed to surface. This

approach fully acknowledges the complexities and difficulties of changing racist attitudes and behaviour.

> "Racism after all is not only about prejudices based on ignorance, but also how certain groups and individuals are disadvantaged by people in position to exercise power."
>
> (Ashrif, 1984:14)

Confrontationist strategies by virtue of their explosive nature, should only be used by appropriately trained teachers who are already attuned to working in the multicultural/ intercultural areas. The emotions such strategies can unleash require careful handling if there is to be any degree of intercultural understanding. The use of such strategies would generally require sensitively handled de-briefing sessions whereby the emotions and feelings experienced can be aired in an understanding and accepting environment. Confrontationist strategies may or may not include direct encounters with members of minority groups.

Intercultural Contact

One of the most frequently used strategies in intercultural programs is to organise some form of intercultural contact. This form of contact can lead to greater understanding, awareness and more reflective insights into a different cultural perspective. However, it can also create conflict, re-inforce prejudice and stereotypes. Significant factors which determine positive or negative outcomes according to Brislin are: (1981:173-179).

- Extremity of initial attitudes
- Conditions at the time of contact
- The number of preconceptions
- History of dominance - subordinate relationships
- Preparedness for contact
- The climate supporting cross-cultural contact.

Only some of these factors are within the control of the teacher or educational administrator.

Before arranging formal cross-cultural contact within the school, institution or out in the community, the teacher can work on initial attitudes and preconceptions to prepare the individual and group for the cross-cultural encounter. Much can be done to prepare for contact and to ensure as far as possible that conditions are favourable. These initial strategies may include direct teaching about race and ethnicity and/or experiential or confrontationist strategies. The teacher may target the individual or concentrate on working on the whole reference group. Equally important is the need for carefully planned follow-up to consolidate and support any change of attitudes and to translate these into behavioural patterns.

Contact may take the form of individuals and groups visiting the class or school. The process of challenging stereotypes and prejudices could begin by inviting guests who are of high status and do not fit the stereotypes. The objective of any visit must be clearly defined, related to a long-term program and explained to the classroom visitor/s. A lecture may not always be the most appropriate mode.

Attitude change is more likely to occur if the learner is an active rather than a passive participant. Research suggests that quite the most productive form of intercultural contact occurs when individuals from different cultural groups have to work together to achieve a super-ordinate goal. This strategy of making people from differing cultural backgrounds work together can be used within the classroom, between classrooms, with visitors to the school, and when pupils are going out into the community. Similarly, for teachers this applies when participating in in-services, and at workshops. Whatever task is devised, it should be designed in such a way that the task cannot be finished without pooling resources and skills. Small group work offers opportunities to interact in a non-threatening way, essential not only for completion of the shared task, but also for the identification of commonalities across groups (Brislin, 1981:182-3).

Even a perfunctory examination of what constitutes successful cross-cultural contact will highlight the inadequacy of the isolated, unplanned "wheel in an ethnic/Aboriginal" visitor or the one-off multicultural or international days. It is their isolation and the lack of integrated planning which leads to exploitation in the name of "positive role models" or "increased understanding".

6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A rationale for effective Intercultural Education programs must, of necessity, be based on successfully identifying and managing a range of interrelationships. These are the interrelationships of individual and of group, of society, culture and of language. It is not possible, to ignore the links between education in and education for a multicultural society, when seeking appropriate strategies to translate the principles of Intercultural Education into its successful practice. One cannot look simply for strategies relating only to ethnicity or strategies relating only to equity, even if the divisions were that clear cut. In fact, equity and empowerment would not be possible in "splendid isolation", removed from factors such as ethnicity and identity. The attainment of one is not possible without the supportive context of the other. The two are mutually interdependent.

For quite some time however, issues relating to ethnicity, identity, self-esteem and sense of worth within one's chosen cultural and linguistic framework, have been relegated to the "soft options" of multiculturalism. They have often been perceived as marginal, at best, and irrelevent, at worst, in the "hard" fight for equitable outcomes. This has meant that programs in areas of Intercultural Education have, themselves, had to fight to survive, to be funded, to attain some measure of credibility.

Unfortunately, lack of co-ordination and attention to such a significant area as a national priority has led to a number of ad hoc attempts to deal with conflict issues, in education systems throughout Australia with varying degrees of success.

To date, teachers who have recognised the potentially explosive nature of such programs, but have perceived the urgency to try anyway, have been unsupported in dealing with questions of intercultural communication and conflict. There has been a growing recognition of the special qualities and sensitivities needed in confronting conflict in a positive way rather than avoiding it or negating its existence.

The potential for conflict in Australia's multicultural society is very real and likely to increase if not addressed systematically and in a co-ordinated way. It has to be faced, and managed as a point for growth. Moreover, initiatives in the area need to be backed up by supportive educational policy, programs and funding which have degree of acceptance in the wider community.

It is not enough to have an education system which helps us to learn English, to learn our own language and to learn the language of others, if in the final analysis we cannot communicate with each other irrespective of the language(s) we speak. The current social and political climate appears to be sustaining a concept of a multicultural Australia whereby difference cannot be sustained in a substantive way.

Our unity as a nation lies in our very ability to co-exist and interact respectfully. This will not happen unless the education systems of this country take on the responsibility for imparting, in Australian classrooms, the necessary principles and interactive skills of Intercultural Education.

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